

Religion is the opiate the people

Religion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Karl Marx and Max Webber together cover the historical core of the sociological tradition. During the nineteenth century, Karl Marx and Max Weber were two of the most influential sociologists. Both of them tried to explain social change taking place in a society at that time. Their view on this from one hand is very different, but also had a lot of similarities. According to Karl Marx, ' Religion is the opiate the people. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people". First of all, what is opium?

Opium is a drug that is used to kill pain. The effects of using opium are experiences a rush of pleasure, followed by an extended period of relaxation, freedom from anxiety, and the relief of physical pain. So why did Marx use the pain killer analogy for religion? Opium does not cure our pain but just make us forget about it, so in my interpretation, what Marx sees is that religion does not solve our problems and pains but just helps us to get through to it. Karl Marx was not philosophically opposed to religion. In fact, he thought that religious belief is important to an oppressed people who need illusions.

Religion is the only way that the masses can relief themselves from the pains, both physical and psychological, that life brings them. At the same time, Marx did not believe that God creates man. Rather man creates religion and a mythical God (Shoulder, 2011). Religion comforts people, gives people meaning, hope, and comfort, and helps them not to be afraid. Weber's work in the field of sociology of religion started with the essay The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and continued with the analysis

of The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism, The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism and Ancient Judaism.

Weber sees that religion is the root of society. Protestant ethic did not cause capitalism but it provided the necessary moral and economic climate in which capitalism could happen. Industrial revolution and capitalism brought big changes so Weber used this to make a link between religious ideas and social change. To unite people with many different interests the society needs something that can hold them together, which is religion. In the Sociology of Religion, Weber lays out his thesis that people pursue their interests, and that religious leaders and structures help people achieve those goals.

In this way religion provides the tools for both stability and social change (Townesley, 2004). The religious leaders use this opportunities to control the society easily. The leader follows the concept of prophet's charismatic ideas to changes and to controls the society. Marx believes that only the baser instincts of greed separation and exploitation motivate work and that religion is the camouflage that conceals the truth of this while Weber has the opposing view that motivation comes from the individuals wish to overcome problems, supported by the religious work ethic to do good for the common good.

For weber, it was the ethics of Protestantism, which was placing high value on work and saving money in contrast to Catholic faith that is more inclined to holidays and enjoying the good things in life. For Marx, it was just a new phase of ages old development of the conflict between the owners of means

of production and those who actually use them to produce goods. Weber showed that Protestants held that their status would show fates.

Meaning if God had predetermined that you were going to Heaven, he would not let you live an unhappy life, because you were one of the chosen. Base on Marx's famous line " religion is the opium of the people" have a negative interpretation that too many " dose" of religion can be bad to people. For example, the extremist who is addicted to religion, they have become a euphoria that can bring such an extreme action such as terrorism that killed " for the name of God". However Weber argues for making sense of religious action on its own terms.

A religious group or individual is influenced by all kinds of things, but if they claim to be acting in the name of religion, we should attempt to understand their perspective on religious grounds first. Weber gives religion credit for shaping a person's image of the world, and this image of the world can affect their view of their interests, and ultimately how they decide to take action. As for myself, I can't decide which theory is better, both has a positive and negative side. So I think we have to find balance between Marx's and Webber's opinion and adapt it to our modern society.